

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 OMB-01 AID-05 SAJ-01 CU-02

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R 010805Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4749

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 1108

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO PINT

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN COMMUNISTS HOLD CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: FEB 21-23 CONGRESS OF PARTY OF PROGRESS AND SOCIALISM, MOROCCO'S COMMUNIST PARTY, WAS MILESTONE FOR MOROCCAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN ILLEGAL THROUGHOUT MOST OF POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. PROCEEDINGS DOMINATED BY SECRETARY GENERAL ALI YATA, WHOSE RELATIVELY MODERATE PROGRAM CALLED FOR WIDE RANGING NATIONALIZATION AND LAND REFORM AND FOR DELAY IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS UNTIL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION COULD CREATE PROPER CONDITIONS.

2. PARTY IS VERY WEAK. 350 OR SO PERSONS WHO ATTENDED CONGRESS MAY BE MOST OF ITS MEMBERSHIP. THUS, FOR PRESENT, LEGALIZATION HAS COST REGIME LITTLE AND SHOULD ENHANCE GOM'S IMAGE, WITH MORE LIBERAL COUNTRIES IN GENERAL AND WITH COMMUNIST STATES IN

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PARTICULAR. AT SAME TIME, GROUP HAS CERTAIN FOLLOWING AND

CONGRESS HAS GIVEN IT STATUS IT HAS NOT ENJOYED FOR MANY YEARS. END SUMMARY.

3. FROM FEB 21-23, MOROCCAN PARTY OF PROGRESS AND SOCIALISM (PPS), MOROCCO'S COMMUNIST PARTY, HELD CONGRESS IN CASABLANCA. GATHERING WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 350 OF THE FAITHFUL PLUS DELEGATIONS FROM ALL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES EXCEPT ALBANIA, AS WELL AS FROM FRENCH, PORTUGUESE, SPANISH AND CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. AMONG ARABS, ONLY SYRIAN AND IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTIES SENT DELEGATIONS. LOCAL POLITICAL GROUPS REPRESENTED BY BOUABID OR SOCIALIST UNION, BOUCETTA AND OTHER ISTIQLAL LEADERS, AND DELGATION FROM MOROCCAN TRADE UNION.

4. EXCEPT FOR BRIEF PERIOD IN 1968, WHEN RECONSTITUTED AS PARTY OF LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM (PLS), MOROCCAN CP HAS BEEN ILLEGAL FROM 1959 UNTIL AUGUST 1974. CONGRESS IS PARTY'S FIRST IN MANY YEARS, AND MAY INDEED BE ONLY SUCH GATHERING GROUP HAS EVER BEEN PERMITTED TO HOLD HERE. CONGRESS WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 7-9 BUT WAS DELAYED, WE UNDERSTAND AT REQUEST OF PALACE.

5. PARTY'S NEWSPAPER, AL BAYANE, HAS YET TO PUBLISH DETAILS OF CONGRESS' RESOLUTIONS, AND FOLLOWING BASED ON OUR OBSERVATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS OBSERVERS. SEVEN-HOUR DOCTRINAL SPEECH BY SECRETARY GENERAL ALI YATA, WHO COMPLETELY DOMINATED PROCEEDINGS, SET TONE OF CONGRESS. YATA DEALT AT EXCRUCIATING LENGTH WITH ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMMUNIST AND ARAB WORLDS, DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING NON-COMMUNIST INDUSTRIALIZED STATES, AND SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS IN MOROCCO RESULTING FROM POOR LAND DISTRIBUTION AND DOMINANT ROLE OF FOREIGN CAPITAL IN NATIONAL ECONOMY. IN ARAB AFFAIRS, HE MADE USUAL BOW TO PALESTINIANS, WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE ADDRESSED CONGRESS, AND CALLED FOR CONVENING OF GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE. HE ALSO PRONOUNCED HIMSELF IN FAVOR OF MAGHREB UNION, PROVIDED EACH COUNTRY IN GROUP RUN BY PROGRESSIVE REGIME. ON SAHARA AND ENCLAVES, HE MADE STRONG NATIONALISTIC PITCH AND PRAISED REGIME'S POLICY. HE USED SAHARA AND ENCLAVES AS PEG ON WHICH TO HANG PRAISE OF ARMY'S "VALOROUS ROLE IN LIBERATION BATTLE". SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS' ONLY COVERAGE OF CONGRESS HAS BEEN TO CARRY VERBTAIN TEXT OF GATHERING'S CONFIDENTIAL

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SAHARA AND ENCLAVES RESOLUTION.

6. TO REMEDY MOROCCAN SITUATION, YATA PUT FORWARD MODERATE PROGRAM WHICH INCLUDED NATIONALIZATION OF LARGE SEGMENTS OF ECONOMY, LAND REFORM, ARABIZATION AND, APPARENTLY WITH SOME HESITATION, AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS. ON POLITICAL FUTURE, HE REITERATED VIEW EXPRESSED TO US PRIVATELY THAT ELECTIONS SHOULD ONLY BE HELD AFTER FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT OF

NATIONAL UNION IN WHICH POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD BE ALLOWED
TO PARTICIPATE AND TO HELP CREATE SITUATION IN COUNTRY IN
WHICH MEANINGFUL ELECTIONS COULD TAKE PLACE.

7. AT CONCLUSION OF CONGRESS, YATA ELECTED SECRETARY GENERAL.
ACCORDING TO FEB 25 LE MONDE, COMMUNIST STALWARTS ABDALLAH
LAYACHI AND ABDESLAM BOURQIA ARE OTHER MEMBERS OF CENTRAL
COMMITTEE'S SECRETARIAT. LE MONDE ALSO REPORTS THAT MORE
RECENT AND YOUNGER PPS ADHERENTS, INCLUDING TWO WOMEN AND ONE
SOCIOLOGIST, WERE NAMED TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE. AT OUTSET OF
GATHERING, MOHAMMED V UNIVERSITY ECONOMIST AZIZ BELLAL,
CHAIB RIFFI, AND SIMON LEVY, WERE ON STAGE WITH YATA. LAST
MENTIONED IS ONE OF RARE MEMBERS OF MOROCCAN JEWISH
COMMUNITY, ALONG WITH JAILED LEFTIST ABRAHAM SERFATY, WHO
WE KNOW TO BE ACTIVE IN POLITICS HERE. RIFFI WAS ACTIVE IN PARTY
WHEN IT RECONSTITUTED AS PLS IN 1968 AND WAS JAILED WITH YATA
FOR EIGHT MONTHS IN 1969-70 WHEN PLS WAS SUPPRESSED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 1108

8. OUR IMPRESSION OF CONGRESS IS THAT IT WAS LESS WELL ORGANIZED THAN ISTIQLAL, NATIONAL UNION OF POPULAR FORCES, AND SOCIALIST UNION GATHERINGS, AND THAT WOMEN AND YOUTH, MANY OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE, WERE HEAVILY REPRESENTED AMONG ASSEMBLED MILITANTS. SOCIALIST UNION LEADER TOLD US THAT THERE WAS NO PROCESS OF "CHOOSING" DELEGATES TO CONGRESS. ALL CELL MEMBERS, MAINLY IN CASABLANCA AND RABAT, SIMPLY TOLD TO ATTEND. GROUP AT CONGRESS THEREFORE MAY HAVE REPRESENTED VERY LARGE PERCENTAGE OF PARTY'S TOTAL MEMBERSHIP. LEADER ALSO NOTED THAT NO TEXT OF YATA'S MASSIVE SPEECH SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE TO THOSE PRESENT AND THAT INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION OF REPORT WOULD THEREFORE HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT. (EMBOFF WHO ATTENDED OPENING SESSION OF CONGRESS NOTED THAT DOCUMENT WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN "THESES" PREPARED FOR CONGRESS WAS AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS. THIS THIRTY-PAGE REPORT ONLY BAREST OUTLINE OF YATA'S SPEECH, HOWEVER.)

9. YATA'S INDICATION THAT HE WISHED ELECTIONS POSTPONED MEANS
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THAT, OF FOUR "OPPOSITION" PARTIES, TWO (UNFP AND PPS) FAVOR DELAY WHILE ISTIQLAL AND SOCIALIST UNION ARE FOR VOTING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ISTIQLAL ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY AL ALAM HAS ALREADY ATTACKED YATA'S STAND, ARGUING THAT THOSE CALLING FOR DELAY IN ELECTIONS ARE IN EFFECT IN FAVOR OF PERPETUATING PRESENT SITUATION. SOCIALIST UNION LEADER SAID HE THOUGHT YATA'S POSITION ON ELECTIONS QUITE LOGICAL GIVEN OBVIOUS WEAKNESS OF PPS.

10. COMMENT: CONGRESS IS CLEARLY MILESTONE FOR PPS AND YATA. ALTHOUGH AS RESULT OFFICIAL PRESSURE, PARTY HAS REMOVED REFERENCE TO MARXISM-LENINISM FROM ITS DOCTRINE, IT IS STILL COMMUNIST AND CONGRESS HAS GIVEN IT A SORT OF STATUS IT HAS NOT ENJOYED FOR MANY YEARS.

11. PARTY HAS SOME APPEAL IN YOUNGER GENERATION. DESPITE YATA'S IMAGE AS SHOPWORN USSR STOOGES, THERE IS CONSENSUS HERE THAT HE AND HIS GROUP ENJOY A FOLLOWING AMONG UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. CONGRESS HAS GIVEN PPS OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW ITS ADHERENTS THAT IT IS ALIVE, IF NOT WELL, AND THAT IT HAS OFFICIAL AUTHORIZATION TO OPERATE OPENLY.

12. FROM REGIME'S STANDPOINT, LEGALIZATION OF PPS SEEMS SHREWD MOVE, AT LEAST IN SHORT RUN. FOR NEAR TERM, PARTY WILL REMAIN WEAK AND POLICE SURVEILLANCE CLOSE, AND POTENTIAL THREAT TO SECURITY OF REALM WILL THEREFORE BE MINIMAL. THUS, AT MODEST COST, REGIME HAS GIVEN ITSELF A LIBERAL APPEARANCE WHICH WILL STRENGTHEN ITS STANDING WITH OTHER MORE LIBERAL COUNTRIES IN GENERAL AND WITH COMMUNIST STATES IN PARTICULAR. AS LONG AS YATA IS ABLE TO CONTINUE HIS MONARCHIST COMMUNIST BALANCING ACT, HE REMAINS ASSET FOR REGIME.

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